63D CONGRESS, 3d Session. | HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES. | DOCUMENT No. 1511

CHANNEL AT SEADRIFT, TEX.

LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF WAR,

TRANSMITTING,

WITH A LETTER FROM THE CHIEF OF ENGINEERS, REPORTS ON PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION AND SURVEY OF CHANNEL AT SEADRIFT, TEX., WITH VIEW TO PROVIDING A SUITABLE CONNECTION WITH THE TEXAS COAST WATERWAY.

JANUARY 21, 1915.—Referred to the Committee on Rivers and Harbors and ordered to be printed, with illustration.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington, January 20, 1915.

The SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith a letter from the Chief of Engineers, United States Army, dated 19th instant, together with copies of reports from Lieut. Col. C. S. Riché, Corps of Engineers, dated September 19, 1913, and July 20, 1914, with map, on preliminary examination and survey, respectively, of channel at Seadrift, Tex., made in compliance with the provisions of the river and harbor act approved March 4, 1913.

Very respectfully,

LINDLEY M. GARRISON,
Secretary of War.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF ENGINEERS,
Washington, January 19, 1915.

From: The Chief of Engineers, United States Army.
To: The Secretary of War.
Subject: Preliminary examination and survey of channel at Seadrift, Tex.

1. There are submitted herewith for transmission to Congress reports dated September 19, 1913, and July 20, 1914, with map, by Lieut. Col. C. S. Riché, Corps of Engineers, on preliminary examination and survey, respectively, of channel at Seadrift, Tex., with a view to providing a suitable connection with the Texas coast waterway, authorized by the river and harbor act approved March 4, 1913.

2. The town of Seadrift is on the eastern shore of San Antonio Bay about 6 miles south of the mouth of Guadalupe River. The main line of the Intracoastal Waterway from Aransas Pass to Pass Cavallo passes through San Antonio Bay about 11 miles below Seadrift, and a branch of this waterway extends from the main line to the mouth of the Guadalupe River, passing about 3 miles to the westward of Seadrift. In 1911 a channel was excavated by local interests from this branch to the wharf at Seadrift. It appears that the outer end of this channel has refilled, and the improvement desired is the redredging of this channel by the United States, or the construction of a new channel across the bay in a southwesterly direction to the Guadalupe branch of the Intracoastal Waterway. The district officer estimates that to redredge the present channel to 5 feet depth and 40 feet width would cost $5,000, with $2,500 annually for maintenance. The proposed new channel would be over 7,000 feet longer than the present channel and would cost over three times as much to excavate. He believes that it would be preferable to redredge the present channel, and recommends the improvement and maintenance of this channel, with the understanding that if the use of the channel fails to continue to justify its maintenance the work can then be abandoned. The division engineer is of opinion that the locality is not worthy of improvement, as the expense of maintenance would be excessive when compared with prospective benefits.

3. These reports have been referred, as required by law, to the Board of Engineers for Rivers and Harbors, and attention is invited to its report herewith, dated January 5, 1915, concurring in the unfavorable views of the division engineer.

4. After due consideration of the above-mentioned reports, I concur in the views of the division engineer and the Board of Engineers for Rivers and Harbors, and therefore report that the improvement by the United States of channel at Seadrift, Tex., with a view to providing a suitable connection with the Texas coast waterway, is not deemed advisable at the present time.

DAN C. KINGMAN,
Chief of Engineers, United States Army.

REPORT OF THE BOARD OF ENGINEERS FOR RIVERS AND HARBORS ON SURVEY.

[Third indorsement.]

BOARD OF ENGINEERS FOR RIVERS AND HARBORS,
January 5, 1915.

To the CHIEF OF ENGINEERS, UNITED STATES ARMY:

1. The following is in review of the district officer's reports of preliminary examination and survey of channel at Seadrift. Tex., with a view to providing a suitable connection with the Texas Coast Waterway, authorized by the act of March 4, 1913.

2. Seadrift is a small town, recently sprung into existence, on the eastern shore of San Antonio Bay, about 6 miles south of the mouth of Guadalupe River. The branch of the Intracoastal Canal that connects with the Guadalupe River passes through San Antonio Bay about 3 miles to the west of Seadrift. A channel about 5 feet deep was dredged by private interests from Seadrift to connect with this branch channel. The inner half of this channel has been kept open through the movement of frequently passing tugs and barges, but the outer half has been completely obliterated.

3. Local interests desire that the United States take over. redredge, and maintain this channel. The principal item of commerce is shell, which is dredged from the bay at a point about half way between Seadrift and the Intracoastal Canal, and transferred to cars at Seadrift for shipment to interior points for use as ballast on the railroad and for surfacing country roads. Aside from this, it is reported that 10,000 bales of cotton have been shipped to Port Aransas, 2,500 cords of wood brought in, and a small quantity of miscellaneous freight received or shipped.

4. The district officer estimates that a channel 5 feet deep and 40 feet bottom width, corresponding with the dimensions of the Intracoastal Canal, would cost $5,000 for construction and $2,500 annually for maintenance. He believes the locality is worthy of improvement to this extent. For reasons given, the division engineer does not concur in this view.

5. In addition to the information presented by the district officer, the board has received several communications [1] from interested parties, and on November 16 a committee of the board visited the locality and held an informal public hearing.

6. It may be seen from an examination of a chart of this locality that Seadrift is located in a bight of San Antonio Bay, nearly 3 miles from the branch of the Intracoastal Canal leading up to the mouth of the Guadalupe River, that the bay is so shallow that the proposed channel would require dredging for its entire length, and that the location of the channel is across the line of tidal flow and river discharge, indicating expensive maintenance.

7. The principal item of commerce up to the present time has been mud-shell, which is dredged from the bay and taken ashore for transfer to rail. This class of commerce is fully accommodated by the present channel and has no bearing upon the question of affording a connection with the Intracoastal Canal. Aside from the shell,

[1] Only one communication printed.

there is very little commerce. It appears that a connection between the Intracoastal Canal and the north shore of San Antonio Bay, for the purpose of affording a shipping place for the use of any considerable section of country, could be made at Long Mott or some other point near by, without requiring the construction or maintenance of a long side channel. This, of course, would not be as convenient for the people in the immediate vicinity of Seadrift, but it would accommodate the general public as well.

8. In view of these conditions, the board reports, in concurrence with the views of the division engineer, that in its opinion it is not advisable for the United States to undertake the improvement of the channel at Seadrift, Tex., with a view to providing a suitable connection with the Texas Coast Waterway.

9. In compliance with law, the board reports that there are no questions of terminal facilities, waterpower, or other subjects which could be coordinated with the project proposed, in such manner as to render the improvement advisable in the interests of commerce and navigation.

For the Board:

W. M. Black,
Colonel, Corps of Engineers,
Senior Member of the Board.

PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION OF CHANNEL AT SEADRIFT, TEX.

United States Engineer Office,
Galveston, Tex., September 19, 1913.

From: The District Engineer Officer.
To: The Chief of Engineers, United States Army
(Through the Division Engineer).
Subject: Examination of channel at Seadrift, Tex., with a view to providing a suitable connection with the Texas Coast Waterway.

1. In compliance with instructions dated March 18, 1913, I submit the following report on the recent examination of the channel at Seadrift, Tex., with a view to providing a suitable connection with the Texas Coast Waterway.

2. The town of Seadrift is on the eastern shore of San Antonio Bay, about 6 miles south of the mouth of Guadalupe River. The branch line of the St. Louis, Brownsville & Mexico Railroad, from Bloomington (on the main line) to Port O'Connor, passes through the town and gives it railroad connection with the outside world.

3. The main line of the Intercoastal Canal, from Aransas Pass to Pass Cavallo, passes through San Antonio Bay about 11 miles below Seadrift, and the branch of this waterway from the main line to the mouth of the Guadalupe River passes about 3 miles to the westward in San Antonio Bay.

4. In 1911 a channel was excavated by the townsite company from this branch of the Intercoastal Canal to the wharf at Seadrift, a distance, as stated above, of about 3 miles. This channel was made about 5 feet deep and 50 feet wide. It was excavated by the United States dredge *Capt. C. W. Howell,* belonging to this district, but was paid for by the townsite company. Since the date of completion the outer end of this channel, for a distance of 5,850 feet from the junction

with the Intercoastal Canal, has refilled until there is now a ruling depth of 2.7 feet. From this point to the wharf the cut is kept open by the movement of tugs and barges carrying mud-shell into the wharf, and there is a depth of 5 feet over this portion.

5. To provide a suitable connection from Seadrift to the Texas Coast Waterway, it will only be necessary for the Government to take over this private channel and redredge it to the same dimensions as the Intercoastal Canal, with which it connects. It is presumed that this was intended by the wording of the act authorizing the making of this examination, although this is not specifically stated. As the present channel is privately owned, it should be conveyed to the United States free of cost before any improvement is undertaken by the General Government.

6. This section of the country is settling up and developing rapidly. Attention is invited to the accompanying report of Mr. Charles Schuster, junior engineer, and to the statement of the citizens of Seadrift for the commerce both inbound and outbound, of this section. It is believed that this channel is worthy of being improved as a component part of the Intercoastal Canal system, provided the present cut be turned over to the United States free of charge. It is important for the coast canal to connect with the railroad points adjacent to its course. There are not very many of these, one of which is at Seadrift. The channel to this point would enable much traffic from the railroad to be transferred to barges there. In fact, a very healthy traffic of this character has already started.

7. Under these conditions, I therefore recommend that the channel to the town of Seadrift is worthy of improvement.

8. There is no question of water power or other subjects so related to the project proposed that they may be coordinated therewith to lessen the cost and compensate the Government for expenditures made in the interests of navigation. There is a municipal wharf at which terminal facilities are extended to all on equal terms. The St. Louis, Brownsville & Mexico Railroad, however, owns a wharf at the inner end of the channel which is open to all on equal terms. The wharf is used principally for loading mud-shell for track ballast directly from barges into cars and for loading cotton onto barges. Other wharves at this place are all small affairs for private use. The wharves at present in use are adequate for the present commerce and it is believed will be increased as the commerce increases.

9. There is inclosed herewith report of Junior Engineer Chas. Schuster, statement of the citizens of Seadrift, and a sketch map [1] showing the town of Seadrift and the various channels referred to.

C. S. RICHÉ,
Lieut. Col., Corps of Engineers.

[First indorsement.]

OFFICE OF DIVISION ENGINEER, GULF DIVISION,
Baltimore, Md., November 3, 1913.

To the CHIEF OF ENGINEERS:

1. Forwarded.

2. The branch of the Inland Waterway in the upper end of San Antonio Bay was completed in July, 1909. The private channel from this waterway to the site of Seadrift was excavated more than two

[1] Not printed.

years later, in the latter part of 1911. The records show that the money for the channel was furnished by the Refugio Land & Irrigation Co. and the Seadrift Fish & Oyster Co. At the time there was nothing at the locality but a depot, two stores, and seven dwelling houses. The town of Seadrift was thus practically located after the construction of the Inland Waterway through San Antonio Bay.

3. An examination of the map will show that Seadrift was located practically as far from the Inland Waterway as possible, there being practically no other point upon the eastern shore which is farther removed than the place selected. Inquiry of the Galveston office as to why the town was not located some 3 miles to the northwest, where the waterway was much closer to the shore and where an extra channel would have been unnecessary, brings the reply that "the reason that the town of Seadrift was not located about 3 miles northwest of the present position is that the old settlement of Long Mott is located there and land can not be bought there for any reasonable price." This probably would not, however, have prevented the location a mile or two still farther north, where the waterway is equally accessible.

4. An examination of the commerce of Seadrift as reported shows that of the total imports, valued at $106,000, more than $77,000 were in mud-shell, dug within 2 miles of the wharf, and which can hardly be termed "commerce" any more than ballast distributed from a gravel pit would be. Another item of $20,000 worth of machinery appears rather exceptional and probably would not be repeated. This leaves $8,500 as the value of imports representing trade which may be expected to continue.

5. Of the exports, $92,400 is given as the value of cotton, but it is difficult to reconcile this as a report of present commerce, with the statement that the available channel depth is only 2.7 feet. The report might advantageously have been more explicit as to the time of shoaling or the date of shipment. The other exports amount to only $4,725.

6. It can be seen by an examination of the map that the private channel will be subject to great deterioration, as it lies across the line of tidal and current flow, and the report shows that the outer portion of it has been completely obliterated within less than two years. Its maintenance would be extremely difficult unless it were fully protected by dikes.

7. In view of the fact that the town was located after the completion of this portion of the Inland Waterway, that the channel to it is situated in the most unfavorable position possible, and must necessarily involve a relatively excessive cost for maintenance, it is considered that the locality is not worthy of improvement.

LANSING H. BEACH,
Colonel, Corps of Engineers,
Division Engineer.

[Third indorsement.]

BOARD OF ENGINEERS FOR RIVERS AND HARBORS,
January 13, 1914.

To the CHIEF OF ENGINEERS, UNITED STATES ARMY:

1. As a result of a notice sent by the board to interested parties stating that it was not convinced by the within report of the advisability of the United States undertaking this impronement, several

communications have been received, and on this date Hon. G. F. Burgess, Member of Congress, came before the board in behalf of the interests concerned. Based mainly upon information presented by the latter, the board recommends a survey to determine the extent and advisability of improvement.

For the board:

W. M. BLACK,
Colonel, Corps of Engineers,
Senior Member of the Board.

REPORT OF JUNIOR ENGINEER CHARLES SCHUSTER.

SEADRIFT, TEX., *September 1, 1913.*

COLONEL: In compliance with your order of July 28, 1913, I have the honor to submit below the report on a preliminary examination and survey for channel at Seadrift, Tex., with a view of providing a suitable connection with the Texas coast waterway.

The town of Seadrift is located on the eastern shore of San Antonio Bay and is said to have at present about 1,500 inhabitants. The age of the town is about 3 years.

Its industrial establishments are a cotton gin, canning factory for vegetables, canning factory for fish and oysters, railroad wharf, municipal wharf, two fish and oyster wharves, two banks, and two lumber yards.

The distance from the municipal wharf at Seadrift to the Texas coast waterway is 3 miles in a west-southwesterly direction. In 1911 a channel was dredged by the U. S. dredge *Capt. C. W. Howell* and the work paid for by private capital. For a distance of 5,850 feet from the junction of this channel with the coast waterway the channel has silted up so that it is entirely obliterated at present and its ruling depth is 2.7 feet. Thence to Seadrift the channel is kept open by the continual work of tugs and barges, which transport mud-shell from there to the railroad wharf at Seadrift, and the ruling depth of this part of the channel is 5 feet.

During the past year the commerce of Seadrift was reported as follows:

IMPORTS.

Articles.		Quantity.	Value.
Mud-shell	cubic yards	155,743	$77,871.50
Fish	tons	40	1,600.00
Oysters	pounds	3,000	3,000.00
Cordwood	cords	400	1,400.00
Machinery	tons	200	20,000.00
General merchandise	do	50	2,500.00
Total			106,371.50

EXPORTS.

Oysters	gallons	2,500	$2,125.00
Cotton	bales	1,400	92,400.00
Fish	tons	40	1,600.00
Total			96,125.00

The transportation facilities of the port are 14 gasoline launches of 1 to 6 tons capacity, 1 schooner of 12 tons, 4 sloops of 3 to 8 tons, 5 shell barges of 400 to 600 tons, 3 tugs, and numerous small boats.

The Bloomington-Port O'Connor branch line of the St. Louis, Brownsville & Mexico Railroad has a station at Seadrift.

The agricultural area tributary to Seadrift consists of about 15,000 acres of fertile lands, suitable for raising vegetables, cotton, corn, peanuts, etc.

Respectfully submitted.

CHAS. SCHUSTER, *Junior Engineer.*

Lieut. Col. C. S. RICHÉ,
Corps of Engineers.

LETTER OF A. D. POWERS, PRESIDENT OF FIRST BANK OF SEADRIFT.

FIRST BANK OF SEADRIFT,
Seadrift, Tex., September 1, 1913.

SIR: I beg to submit the following relative to the business transacted at Seadrift, Tex.:

Cotton shipments from Seadrift.—The traffic manager of the Port Aransas Transportation Co. estimated that there will be 50,000 bales of cotton shipped from Seadrift to Port Aransas during the present season. At this date, August 12, the first shipment of 500 bales has left our Seadrift wharf. There are about 1,000 bales of cotton on the track now awaiting shipment through the Intercoastal Canal to Port Aransas. The Port Aransas Transportation Co. has a representative at Seadrift for the purpose of facilitating the transfer of cotton from the Frisco Railroad to the barges. There are a number of cotton buyers at different points within 50 miles of Seadrift, all buying cotton for shipment from Seadrift to Port Aransas through the Intercoastal Canal.

Merchandise shipments.—The Aransas Pass Channel & Dock Co. have arranged for a coastwise vessel from Baltimore to Aransas Pass to carry merchandise. The barges now in use for carrying cotton from Seadrift to Port Aransas are built to carry merchandise in the hold and the Port Aransas Transportation Co. are expecting to carry merchandise from Port Aransas to Seadrift. The Blum Hardware Co., of Galveston, own the schooner *Margaret*, and they have had a representative at Seadrift soliciting freight to be shipped from Galveston to Seadrift by the Intercoastal Canal. This company is now shipping carload freight by rail to Bloomington for reshipment in less than carloads and they propose to make these bulk shipments to Seadrift by schooner and to reship from Seadrift by rail. The Frisco Railroad has a pier built out into the water about 1,000 feet, and they are loading mud-shell at the rate of 20 cars a day for use on the county roads and for ballast on the railroad. There are two steam derricks working dippers unloading shell cars, one of which is at work all the time. The Haden Dredging Co. has from three to five shell barges and two tugs in the channel all the time.

Municipal wharf.—There is a municipal wharf at Seadrift, built on piling, 50 feet wide and 150 feet long. No charge is made for landing boat or barge at this wharf.

Present channel.—At the time the Intercoastal Canal was dredged in front of the town of Seadrift there was nothing here but a depot, two stores, and seven dwelling houses, and the channel was not dredged into the landing. Private capital dredged a channel from a connection with the Intercoastal Canal to the present landing. This channel is 5 feet deep and 50 feet wide. Private capital has also widened the channel alongside the railroad pier to 100 feet wide and made a turning basin 150 feet wide at the municipal wharf.

Population.—Seadrift has fifteen hundred people at the present time and the population is growing rapidly.

Industrial establishments.—Seadrift has a fish and oyster shipping business and oyster canning business, vegetable canning factory, cotton gin, 2 lumber yards, 2 State banks, a newspaper, and 12 retail stores.

Farming country.—Seadrift is the trading point for a territory extending on three sides about 15 miles. In this area there are about 10,000 acres in cultivation and more acreage is being put into cultivation every year. The principal crops are cotton, corn, sweet potatoes, and early vegetables.

Very respectfully,

FIRST BANK OF SEADRIFT,
A. D. POWERS, *President.*

Lieut. Col. C. S. RICHÉ,
Corps of Engineers.

LETTER OF AMERICAN TOWNSITE CO.

SAN ANTONIO, TEX., *December 26, 1913.*

GENTLEMEN: I have received your notice in reference to a channel at Seadrift, Tex. I have dredged a channel into Seadrift at my own expense of about $1,500, and I am perfectly willing to turn this over to the Government free of charge.

While the town of Seadrift was not on the map when the Intercoastal Canal was dredged in that vicinity, it is now a town of 1,500 people and is growing rapidly.

There is more than a local commerce in and out of Seadrift. In addition to the mud-shell that is being shipped from Seadrift we have exported this year more than 10,000 bales of cotton through the Intercoastal Canal to Aransas Pass. We are also

receiving merchandise from Aransas Pass, transported by the Port Aransas Transportation Co. In addition to that we have a schooner bringing freight from Galveston twice a month.

Seadrift is the only town on the Intercoastal Canal that has a railroad pier built out into the water connecting with the channel. Seadrift has transported more freight through the Intercoastal Canal during the past 12 months than any other town between Galveston and Corpus Christi.

The towns of Austwell and Tivoli, both growing towns, receive their freight by water from Seadrift. The Frisco Railroad built a branch line connecting with Austwell and Tivoli; but on account of the recent floods the road has been out of commission about two months and will probably not be reconstructed for some time. These towns represent a population of some 600 or 700 people, and they receive their freight from Seadrift.

I believe the facts in the case warrant the Government's taking over this channel and maintaining it, and the people of Seadrift and Calhoun County will appreciate it. I am sending you a printed booklet[1] under separate cover that will give you more information about Seadrift.

Yours, truly,

A. D. POWERS, *President.*

The BOARD OF ENGINEERS FOR RIVERS AND HARBORS.

SURVEY OF CHANNEL AT SEADRIFT, TEX.

UNITED STATES ENGINEER OFFICE,
Galveston, Tex., July 20, 1914.

From: District Engineer Officer.
To: The Chief of Engineers, United States Army
(Through the Division Engineer).
Subject: Survey of channel at Seadrift, Tex.

1. In compliance with instructions from the office of Chief of Engineers, dated January 17, 1914, the following report is submitted on survey of the channel at Seadrift, Tex., with a view to providing a suitable connection with the Texas coast waterway.

2. The field work of the survey was done between April 10 and 18, 1914, by E. B. Sandelands, inspector, whose report accompanies this. The survey covered the section of the inland waterway adjacent to Seadrift and the area of bay intervening between this cut and the shore line at the above-named town.

3. A general description of the locality is given in the report on preliminary examination and will not be repeated here. The channel at present used, which it is proposed to have taken over by the General Government, extends from a connection with the Guadalupe branch of the inland waterway across the bay in a general direction N. 60° E. 14,930 feet to the railroad wharf at Seadrift. It was constructed by private enterprise. A dredge has been engaged for some time about midway of its length in dredging mud-shell from the reefs in the bay. This shell is loaded on barges and taken to the wharf at Seadrift, where it is loaded on cars and hauled away for railway-track ballast and highway material. The constant agitation caused by the towing of these barges back and forth has kept the channel in this section deep, and has even scoured it deeper than originally dredged. For the remaining 7,100 feet to a connection with the inland waterway the channel is shoaler and needs redredging.

4. On June 24, 1914, a public hearing was held at Seadrift by the division engineer, Col. Landing H. Beach, Corps of Engineers, and arguments and commercial statistics were submitted by various inter-

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[1] Not printed.

ested parties. The report[1] of this hearing is inclosed herewith and attention is invited to it and to the several statements of commercial statistics, which have been embodied in the record.

ESTIMATE.

5. To redredge the existing channel to 5 feet depth and 40 feet width, to conform to the adopted dimensions of other sections of the inland waterway, will require the removal of about 35,600 cubic yards, and the estimate is as follows:

25,000 cubic yards from within-prescribed cross section, at 15 cents	$3,750
10,600 cubic yards from 1 foot below prescribed, at 7½ cents	795
Engineering and contingencies	455
Total	5,000

The annual maintenance is estimated at $2,500. This is based on redredging the entire channel, as the shell dredge now operating there may be removed at any time and the beneficial effect of its operations stop. As before stated, the towing back and forth of barges from this dredge has maintained the channel to over the proposed depth, so that to give 5 feet depth and 40 feet width through the entire channel will require the redredging of only about one-half its length.

6. The Seadrift interests favor an entirely new channel across the bay in a southwesterly direction to the beginning of the Guadalupe branch of the inland waterway, claiming that it would give a more direct route than the old channel and require less maintenance. As it would be over 7,000 feet longer than the present channel and would cost over three times as much to excavate, it will be better to redredge the old channel.

CONCLUSION.

7. Seadrift is one of the few places along the line of the coast canal where there exists a railroad wharf at which transfers can be effected from car to barges and vice versa. As shown by the public hearing a very creditable business by reason of these facilities has been conducted in and out of this town through the channel that has been opened by private enterprise. It is important for the entire coast canal system to have as many places as possible where connection can be made between rail and water, and Seadrift by reason of its development hitherto is probably one of the best places that can now be selected for that purpose. As a feeder of the Intercoastal Canal system the improvement of this channel and its maintenance is therefore recommended, with the understanding that if the use of the channel fails to continue to justify its maintenance the work can then be abandoned. Meanwhile, it is believed that the commerce that has already been handled at Seadrift, and the probability that similar commerce will be handled for some time to come, makes the improvement recommended fully justifiable.

8. There is no question of water power involved, the entire channel being in open bay and tidal. Several wharves exist at the town of Seadrift, the largest and most important being the railroad wharf at the terminus of the present channel. This is privately owned but is understood to be open to all carriers on equal terms. Other wharves will be provided as necessity arises.

[1] Not printed.

INCLOSURES.

There are inclosed, report of the public hearing [1] held at Seadrift, containing commercial statistics and arguments, report of Inspector E. B. Sandelands and map of the survey in one sheet.

C. S. RICHÉ,
Lieut. Col. Corps of Engineers.

[First indorsement.]

OFFICE OF DIVISION ENGINEER, GULF DIVISION,
Baltimore, Md., December 7, 1914.

To the CHIEF OF ENGINEERS:

1. Forwarded.

2. The survey and hearing show that the material forming the bottom of the bay to the east of the Guadalupe River section of the Inland Waterway in front of the town of Seadrift, Tex., is very soft and easily moved. Where the channel is subjected to the passage of eight or nine tows a day in both directions; that is, about 16 or 18 passages through the channel in 24 hours, the depth is maintained, but where such number of passages has not occurred the channel has filled and been completely obliterated in the course of a few months. It is hardly probable that the commerce of Seadrift will be sufficient to keep the channel open, and it will be subject to rapid and constant deterioration. It would not serve the purpose to dredge the channel at long intervals, for the silting would begin immediately and be constant, and it would probably be only a short time after it was dredged before the shoaling would be sufficient to prevent the passage of fully loaded barges, a matter of the greatest importance where the project depth is not more than enough to provide for a small barge.

3. The town could not have been placed at a worse locality on the east side of Aransas Bay as far as connection with the Inland Waterway is concerned. It has been located at that point which is most difficult of access, to which the distance from the waterway is greatest, and to which it will be most expensive to open and maintain a channel. Seadrift was not started until after this portion of the Inland Waterway had been completed, but, as stated in the hearing, it was located without regard whatever to the waterway and solely with consideration for land matters. There is a town, or settlement, named Long Mott, at the head of the bay, from which a wharf could be easily built from the mainland to the waterway itself. Long Mott is also upon the railroad and only $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Seadrift. It could serve this section of the country equally as well as Seadrift. The trouble appears to be that the people at Long Mott have not awakened to the advantage which they possess, while the inhabitants of Seadrift are more wide-awake and progressive, or it may be that the railroad people themselves are more interested in Seadrift than in Long Mott.

4. Owing to the fact that there will be constant difficulty and expense in maintaining the channel to Seadrift, while access to the Inland Waterway can be so easily obtained at another point within less than 6 miles, it is not believed that the United States is justified

[1] Not printed.

in incurring the expense of opening and maintaining the channel requested. The locality is therefore not regarded as worthy of improvement.

LANSING H. BEACH,
Colonel, Corps of Engineers,
Division Engineer.

[For report of the Board of Engineers for Rivers and Harbors on survey, see page 3.]

REPORT OF INSPECTOR E. B. SANDELANDS.

UNITED STATES ENGINEER OFFICE,
Galveston, Tex., May 20, 1914.

From: E. B. Sandelands, inspector.
To: Lieut. Col. C. S. Riché, Corps of Engineers.
Subject: Survey of channel at Seadrift, Tex.

1. I herewith respectfully submit the following report on survey of channel at Seadrift, Tex., under the appropriation for examinations, surveys, and contingencies, rivers and harbors.

DESCRIPTION.

1. Seadrift Channel is located in San Antonio Bay and extends from its junction with the Guadalupe River Branch of the Intercoastal Canal, between beacons Nos. 3 and 4, to the town of Seadrift, Tex., a distance of 14,930 feet approximately, bearing approximately N. 60° E.

2. The channel is at present private property and is used mostly by a contracting firm that is dredging mud-shell from the reefs between Seadrift and the Intercoastal Canal. From the Seadrift end to within 7,100 feet of the junction with the Intercoastal Canal there is no need of dredging, as the channel shows 5 feet of water at mean low tide, with a 40-foot bottom width and 1 on 3 side slopes. The remaining 7,100 feet show an average bank of 2.05 feet, which to clean out will require the removal of 24,878 cubic yards of mud-shell to bring to 5 feet depth at mean low tide.

3. Seadrift interests are in favor, first of a channel from the Seadrift Slip to beacon No. 1 on the Intercoastal Canal, Guadalupe Branch, the contention being that sediment from the Guadalupe River will make constant dredging in the present channel necessary, whereas a new route, such as the one favored, will not be so much subject to this condition. Such a channel would give a more direct route to Galveston and Aransas Pass, which is what is desired. This new channel will require the excavation of about 84,408 cubic yards for a cut 40 feet wide and 5 feet deep. If, on account of excessive cost, this can not be done, the Seadrift people wish the present Seadrift Channel to be taken over by the United States and by them maintained.

PROGRESS.

1. Party left mile 13 on canal from Brazos River to Matagorda at 7.45 a. m., April 7, 1914, arriving at Seadrift at 7.25 p. m., April 9, 1914, after having been delayed one day on account of high north wind and one-half day on account of being aground on reef in San Antonio Bay.

2. The survey proper was begun April 10, 1914, and completed April 18, 1914. Delays on account of bad weather totaled one day. On account of the great number of what is locally known as "towheads" and larger reefs in San Antonio Bay, it was found in some instances impossible to get soundings over parts of the bay. During the progress of the survey much time was lost by the awkwardness attendant to working in rough water with high winds.

METHOD USED.

1. A base line was run by stadia and transit along the shore from approximately 13,000 feet south of Seadrift to 19,000 feet northwest of Seadrift. From this base line located soundings were taken and beacons located. Longitudinal soundings were taken in Intercoastal Canal from beacon No. 1 to No. 8 and in Seadrift Channel. Cross sections of both channels were taken at nearly all the beacons except where found impossible to do so on account of rough water.

2. All soundings were reduced to the plane of mean low tide of the Gulf, tide gauges having first been set at Seadrift wharf, at the same elevation as the one on beacon No. 6, Intercoastal Canal, which was also checked against the known elevations of tops of pipes, beacons Nos. 1 to 8.

Very respectfully,

E. B. SANDELANDS, *Inspector.*

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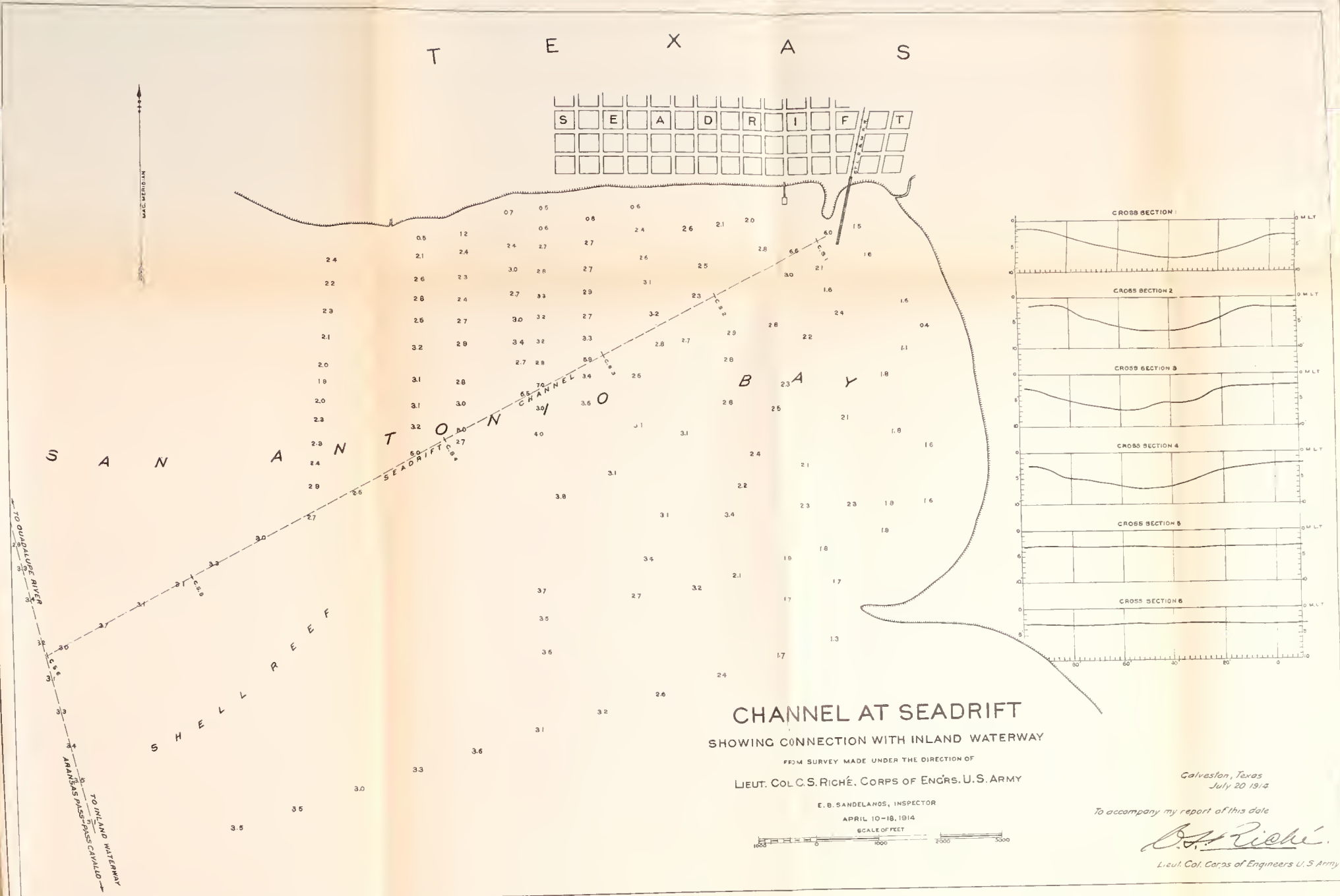

CHANNEL AT SEADRIFT

SHOWING CONNECTION WITH INLAND WATERWAY

FROM SURVEY MADE UNDER THE DIRECTION OF

LIEUT. COL. C. S. RICHÉ, CORPS OF ENG'RS. U. S. ARMY

E. B. SANDELANDS, INSPECTOR

APRIL 10–18, 1914

SCALE OF FEET

1000 0 1000 2000 3000

Galveston, Texas
July 20 1914

To accompany my report of this date

C. S. Riché.

Lieut. Col. Corps of Engineers U. S. Army

House Doc. No. 1511; 63d Cong., 3d Sess.